

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP), and Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP)

Bulletin 05-01

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Choice School Staff Credentials

All private schools participating in the Private School Choice Programs (PSCP) must ensure that their administrators, teachers and teacher aides meet the following requirements. PSCP schools that fail to meet these requirements may be terminated from the PSCP.

Requirements

Administrators: All choice administrators must have *at least* a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Administrator is defined as superintendent, supervising principal, executive director or other person who acts as the administrative head of the private school participating in the program.

Teachers: All choice teachers must have *at least* a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Teacher is defined under current law to mean a person who has primary responsibility for the academic instruction of pupils.

Temporary Nonrenewable Teacher Waiver: Any teacher employed at a private school participating in the MPCP on July 1, 2010, the RPCP on July 1, 2011, or the WPCP on July 1, 2013, who has been teaching for at least 5 consecutive years immediately preceding that July 1 and who does not have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education, must have applied to the department for a temporary, nonrenewable waiver from teacher credential requirements. The applicant must include on the waiver form a plan for satisfying the credential requirements, including the name of the accredited institution of higher education at which the teacher is pursuing or will pursue the bachelor's degree and the anticipated date on which the teacher expects to complete the bachelor's degree. If a teacher was granted a temporary nonrenewable teacher waiver the teacher must provide the school with a copy of the waiver. In addition, the teacher must provide the department and school with annual updates to his or her plan to obtain a bachelor's degree. No waiver issued is valid after five years or July 31, 2018, whichever is earlier.

Teacher Aides: Each private school shall ensure that any teacher's aide employed by the private school has *at least* graduated from high school or been granted a general educational development (GED) or high school equivalency diploma (HSED).

Rabbinical Studies Exception to teacher and administrator credentials: A teacher employed by a choice school who teaches *only* courses in rabbinical studies is not required to meet the bachelor's degree requirement for teachers. An administrator of a choice school that prepares and trains pupils attending the school in rabbinical studies is not required to meet the bachelor's degree requirement for administrators.

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The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

Documentation

A choice school must have the following documents in each administrator, teacher and teacher aide's personnel file. Schools should request the documents prior to hiring an administrator, teacher or teacher aide. The school's auditor will be required to review the documentation and report the school's compliance or noncompliance to the department as part of the Fiscal and Internal Control Practices Report due annually on December 15.

Administrator: A copy of at least a bachelor's degree or official transcript indicating the administrator received at least a bachelor's degree, and a copy of the US Department of Education webpage <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/> indicating the institution which granted the degree is accredited.

Teacher: A copy of at least a bachelor's degree or official transcript indicating the teacher received at least bachelor's degree and a copy of the US Department of Education webpage <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/> indicating the institution which granted the bachelor's degree is accredited, or a copy of the teacher waiver issued by the department. If a waiver has been issued for a teacher the teacher must provide to the department and school any updates to his or her plan to obtain a bachelor's degree within five years. Updates are required annually by October 15 on a form provided by the department.

Teacher Aide: A copy of at least a high school diploma, a letter from a high school stating that the individual graduated, an identification of high school graduation on a high school, college or other post-secondary educational agency transcript, a copy of a high school equivalency diploma (HSED) granted by the DPI, a copy of the certificate of general educational development (GED) or an equivalent credential granted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction or another state.

Overseas Institutions

If a degree is from an overseas institution, the administrator or teacher must have his or her transcripts of credit, pattern of training, and degrees awarded evaluated by a professional evaluation service. Only through this *detailed* or *course-by-course* evaluation process can it be determined if foreign preparation is equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.

The administrator or teacher must contact a private agency for an assessment of his or her credentials in terms of degree, course equivalence and translation of course titles. There are numerous foreign transcript evaluation agencies and fees vary. Most public school teachers seeking licensure in Wisconsin use [Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.](#). The [Academic and Credential Records Evaluation and Verification Service \(ACREVS\)](#) and the [American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers](#) also offer a course-by-course evaluation service. Other acceptable credential evaluation agencies include those associated with the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services \(NACES\)](#) or the [Association of International Credentials Evaluators \(AICE\)](#).

The school and teacher or administrator must carefully review the credential evaluation report prepared by the evaluation service to make sure it indicates the administrator or teacher earned the equivalent of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. The school must retain a copy of the report for auditor review.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Are substitute teachers required to have a bachelor's degree?

A1. Yes, if they have primary responsibility for the academic instruction of pupils.

Q2. Is it sufficient to obtain evidence of a college degree for a teacher's aide?

A2. Yes, the law requires that each private school shall ensure that any teacher's aide employed by the private school has at least graduated from high school or been granted a general educational development (GED) or high school equivalency diploma (HSED).

Q3. Is it sufficient to obtain evidence that a teacher has a master's degree from an accredited college rather than obtaining evidence of a bachelor's degree?

A3. Yes, the law requires all PSCP teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.

Q4. What should the school do if the institution of higher education does not show up on the US Department of Education webpage when you know the institution is accredited?

A4. Make sure the institution's name is spelled correctly. Do not use abbreviations. For example, a search using "UW Madison" will provide no results; however, if you type "University of Wisconsin Madison" the search will work. You may also try searching just the main word of the institution's name. If you continue to have problems, please contact Molly Koranda at 608-266-0523 for assistance.

Q5. What if the school closed or lost its accreditation status.

A5. Please contact Molly Koranda at 608-266-0523 for assistance.

Q6. Can a school have more than one administrator?

A6. Yes. Administrator is defined as superintendent, supervising principal, executive director or other person who acts as the administrative head of the private school participating in the program. A school may have both a choice administrator and supervising principal and both individuals would be required to have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education